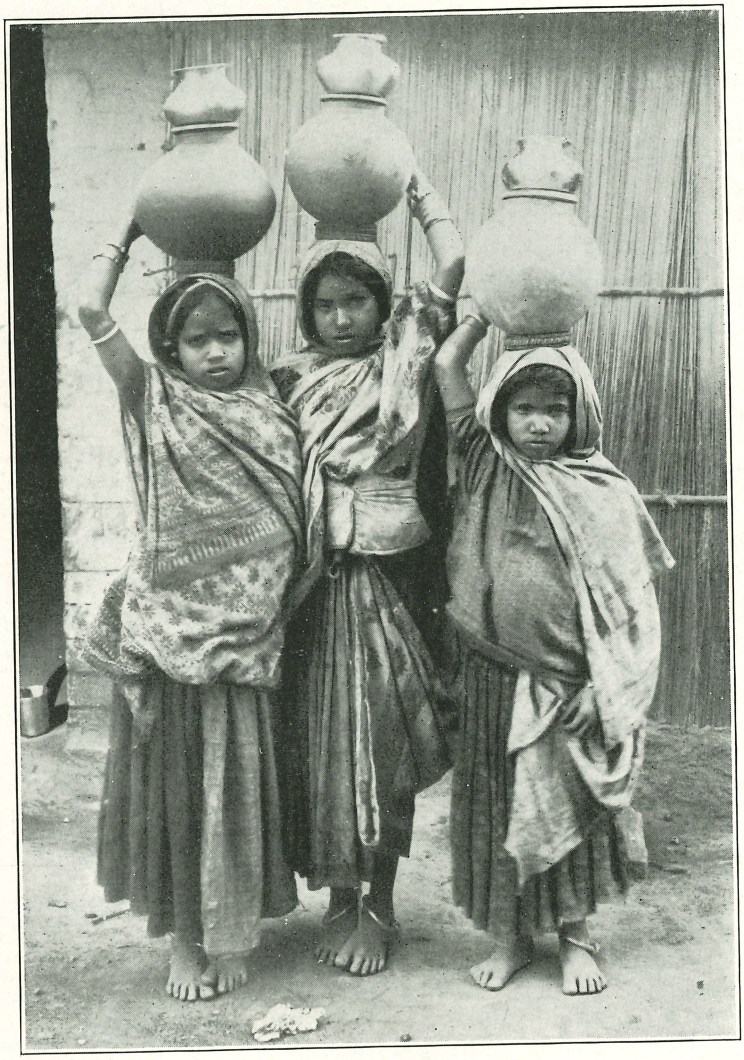
The MEDICAL MISSIONARY



Indian Girls on Their Way to the Well

Vol. V. NOVEMBER, 1931 No. 2

THE FEAST OF UKMETSHWAMA

By Dr. Kohler, *Lentocow, Natal, South Africa*

IF MATERIALISM were not an artificially evolved system but a biological reality, we should be able to find its prototype among primitive tribes. It might be expected that aborigines would furnish us with a proof of the evolution of the human mind and soul but alas, no, we find ourselves reproduced in them as we do in our own children and as children do they demonstrate to us their life and thought. They live, not in a childhood in the sense of the evolutionary theory, but in a symbolical childhood, because they are free from all the complexities and mannerisms of modern society.

The Feast of the First Fruits or Ukmetshwama, which is celebrated by the Zulu Kaffirs in the early autumn, gives us some insight into the inner life of this primitive people. It is one of the great tribal feasts and is eagerly anticipated by the natives every year. They decorate themselves from head to toe with their finest ornaments and, with song and dance, they praise the Great Spirit for having preserved them to enjoy this day.

A hut, constructed of branches, is prepared beforehand by the young men of the tribe. At sunrise, on the appointed day, all the people go to the river to bathe. Joyously returning in procession, they go to the dwelling of the chief of the tribe where one of them calls out the words, "In we go," as a signal for the dance to begin. The dance lasts the whole day. Group after group takes its turn in the gay sport. Occasionally the women dance by themselves, while at other times, all join in with such hilarity as would lead one to think them to be intoxicated. The negro dances seem to be nearly the same everywhere and to have remained unchanged for generations. An exact description of the dances of the Amabhancs, the tribe which we observed, is to be read in Livingstone's "Missionary Travels." The people usually show their joy and work off their excitement in dances and songs. The dance consists of the men standing nearly in a circle, with clubs or small battle axes in their hands, each roaring at the loudest pitch of his voice, while they simultaneously lift one leg, stamp heavily twice with it, then lift the other and stamp twice with that. This is the only movement in common. The arm and head are thrown about in every direction and all this time the roaring is kept up with the utmost possible vigor. The continued stamping makes a cloud of dust ascend and they leave a deep ring in the ground where they have stood. Grey-headed men join in the performance with as much zest, as others, whose youth might be an excuse for making the perspiration stream off their bodies with the exertion.

While the people are thus dancing, the chief and two tribesmen, carrying jugs of medicine, come to the place and walk around the hut. They are followed by the people. This being finished, a variety of speeches follow. The Zulus are as a rule good speakers. When a speaker has finished, he dances alone while the onlookers sing. At last the chief goes up to the centre and dances. A great uproar ensues; the women cry with all their might, *"Ki, ki, hele, hele."* This is the highpoint of the feast. Most of the participants fall into an ecstasy which borders on madness. It is a psychical emotion which seeks to express itself by every form of bodily movement.

Next the medicine man orders the women to retire. Every man present comes forward and is given some fruits and some medicine which are rubbed over the whole body. In the meantime the women perform a wild dance before the tent of the chief and rub their bodies with clay. These rituals being finished, the chief orders beer and other refreshments to be given to the tribesmen who have not eaten or drunk the whole day.

The deeper meaning and origin of this feast must lie in the feeling of dependence in man's consciousness that he is never master of his own destiny. This is the most primitive act of homage of the human heart: "O Strong One; help me. O Mighty One, give unto me." Among most people, even where every trace of belief is lost and forgotten this plaint of the human heart is to be found. It ends only where humanity stops. The Zulus could not show this more clearly. They praise and honor their spirits; their dances are their prayers, the emotion of the soul is expressed in rhythm. It is gladness, fear, sorrow. It is the soul's expression through the body.

I can not imagine a more primitive method of demonstrating a spiritual emotion. It is that unfolding of inner life which goes before intelligible mental expression. Herein lies the meaning of the superabundance of movements, the excitement, the dance, the ecstasy, and the exhaustion.

[*Wurzburg Yearbook,* 1931]

THE N. C. W. C. CONVENTION

The National Council of Catholic Women held its annual convention in Washington, D. C., last month. Delegates from all over the States attended and most interesting papers were read and discussed at the various sessions. A new feature of the convention was the collection of booths exhibiting the activities of women on behalf of family life and emphasizing particularly the work of women for women.

The Organizers at the National Headquarters invited us to co-operate in the display and to exhibit photographs, pictures, maps, etc., and objects of interest connected with the work of the Society. We were able to renew acquaintance with many old friends and interest others in our work. Our most sincere thanks are due to those who invited us to take part in the convention,

The MEDICAL MISSIONARY

Published with ecclesiastical approbation ten times a year by the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Inc., Brookland, Washington, D. C., in the interest of Medical Missions and Women of the Orient. Subscription, $1 per year.
Editor: Dr. Anna Dengel. Telephone: Decatur 3161

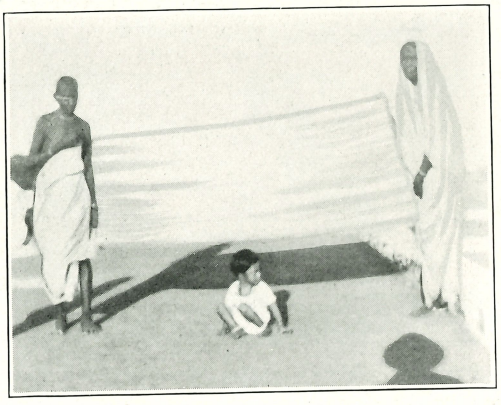
"Entered as second-class matter September 11, 1928, at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879."

FRIDAY—BEGGAR'S DAY

By Sister Mary Laetitia Flieger, *R. N.*

HEAR the Muezzin from the minaret calling: "Come to prayer, come to prayer!" Friday is the Mohammedan's day of prayer and there is apparently an injunction in the Koran to give alms, since most of the "faithful" give a little on Friday. It is also an easy way of getting past sins forgiven and of gaining very great merit before "Allah."

See the beggars pouring from their houses. A pitiful trail they come. Old and young, weak and strong; some blind, others crippled. Many are covered with sores and otherwise diseased. All have several common bonds, religion (as these particular beggars are Mohammedans), poverty, and a deeply rooted enmity towards soap and water. The women all wear mud-colored saris, which have become so from old age and occasional washings in a little dirty water, without the necessary application of soap. Mostly all have an old tin, with two holes punched in the sides, suspended from the neck with a piece of string; this is for the few grains of rice and pice that will be thrown in.



DRYING THE SARI AFTER A SHOWER BATH

Look into their homes! How they live! Three or four earthern-ware cooking utensils! A hole in the ground for a cooking range! A few dried leaves and chips for fire wood. Often the meal consists of a little boiled rice and some curry, made of vegetables cooked in mustard oil and seasoned with hot spices. The rice is dished out on banana leaves, for plates, if they happen to have such a luxury as a banana tree handy, and about a tablespoonful of rice is added for each person. If there are no banana leaves it does not matter in the least, the plate problem is solved by all dipping into the cooking-pot. Afterwards each takes a glass of cold water unless anyone happens to have fever. In that case a little warm water may be taken. The mud floor is the bed. Going to bed consists simply in lying down, rising is standing up and one is ready for the day. The one garment worn does not have to be taken off or changed (there is nothing to change into). When it is dirty, cold water is poured over the person, clothes and all. Standing in the sun to dry, another member of the family unwinds one end of the sari and holds it in the sun while a yard or two remains attached to the body as a skirt. When the open part is ready, the sari is reversed in order to dry the other end.

Life is simplicity itself. I wonder if the Fathers of the Desert managed with so little. When it rains, violently as it generally does in Dacca, the little mat houses are flooded out. The mud floor becomes soft and squashy, pools of water appear. The inhabitants are wet through and everything is swamped. Such a picture of misery inside and out! Once in a while, the *"dai"* will call us to a case in one of these homes during a "big rain" and we get a little idea of the sufferings of the poor people. Not a dry spot to stand on and nowhere to sit. Usually a brick or a small piece of board is produced, on which we perch like birds while listening to the history of the case.

Thanks be to God that we are not born Bengali beggars. It is in these rains which last many months that the infant mortality goes up. The poor babies develop pneumonia and getting no proper care, and having very little resistance, they die within a few days.

After a while one begins to know and recognize certain of these beggars.

There is little Miriam leading her old blind father. She holds one end of a long bamboo cane, he the other. She is a serious little maid with a keen eye for business, never missing a chance and knowing just who will give pice and who will not. Poor little thing, she ought to be playing with dolls and other children rather

than engaged in the task of money-making.

Then there is Bilkis Banu. She has five small steps of children, each one dirtier and thinner than the last but all can beg with great gusto. Her husband died of typhoid fever and we sent him to Heaven about a year ago. We offered to take her and the five children to the convent, to be cared for and educated by the Sisters, but Bilkis would have nothing to do with that little plan, so she wanders around the streets of Dacca begging from house to house, rather than staying clean and well-fed with the Sisters.

There is old Budhi, about 60, who four years ago married a man older than herself. She says he is 80, but that he may be 50 or 100, for all they know about ages. He is quite blind and as she has two cataracts, neither can see much of the other.

Fatma is quite young. She has two money-making assets; a most awful looking pair of eyes and worse than that, a young baby. She carries the child on her hip to the most crowded thoroughfare in Dacca and, in an unshaded spot, lies in the dust on her back, and sits the child on her own abdomen with its little back propped against her knees, in the glaring sun. When told that the hot sun beating down on the child's head would kill it, all the response elicited was: *"Ma pisa dao. Ma bhat dao. Ma kapor dao."* Mother give me money. Mother give me cooked rice. Mother give me clothes." Poor baby, it has withstood that kind of treatment for a year or more and still survives.

MIRIAM AT HER DAILY TASK

Another interesting character is a little old man who often comes to the centre. He speaks perfect English, having been educated at a mission school and, coming in, gives a large blessing in the name of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and all the Saints (in spite of his being a Hindu). He is a modest beggar, all he asks is two pice, the price of a cup of tea. Sometimes he is offered rice, but no, he did not ask for rice and he does not want rice. All he wants is the two pice for that cup of tea.

We have one boy about 16, whose mother brings him along on her back and places him on the verandah of the Health Centre. I have remonstrated with her but all to no effect; that was his pitch before we came and it will continue so. What to do? He is certainly no advertisement to have at the front door of a clinic all day, for he is one mass of sores from head to toe, great open spaces which the flies occupy. We suggested trying to heal them but, "No! No!" Those sores are the family source of income.

Poor Alamulla is quite destitute. Recently her baby was born into the world and she had not one rag to cover its poor shivering little body, and was quite content to let it lie naked on the bare ground. We came to the poor mite's rescue with some warm clothes, for it was in the cold season. Altogether it is a daily marvel what these weak babies can stand. Not one baby at home would survive if subjected to half such severe treatment. Alamulla makes her home on the roof of an old ruined Moslem castle, three flights up, in a little cave about three feet square. Here she cooks and eats and sits and sleeps, screwed up in a little ball, for the poor thing can not possibly stretch out at full length. The door consists of an old sack hung across the opening. Think of her condition in the Dacca rains. What a terrible life! Insufficient food, no clothes but an old ragged sari, very few baths, no comfort, no Sundays or holidays and, worst of all, no idea of God! Just poverty, dirt, ignorance and wretchedness. The more I look at such people the more I realize how much God has blessed us in giving us so much.

Another quite different type of beggar abounds in India. He is to be met with from Ceylon all the way up to Kashmir. He is round and fat and well dressed as a rule. His taste in colors seems to run to a dark brown or a delicate peach, but he also has a leaning towards a multi-colored patch-work quilt of a garment. He is like a patriarch of old with his long beard and white curly hair surmounted by a bright colored turban. He has a most benevolent expression and a gentle smile. His begging bowl is very artistic, being made of black polished wood with occasional rare coins and bits of silver or bright glass worked into it. I have been trying to persuade one such old fakir to sell me his curious bowl but he pulls his

ears and says: "*Taba, taba!*" (God forgive, God forgive!) This kind of beggar has a keen eye for business and he becomes very rich for he makes it his duty to know all that is to be known of the inhabitants of his district. No family secret is safe from him. All of which is of great value to Mr. Fakir. He knows that Brown Sahib's servant, Mahomat Ali, is trying to put his son through college in Calcutta and that Brown Sahib has only recently come to India and has not yet mastered the intricacies of pice and annas and does not know that beef is only five annas a seer and he can not possibly be eating a rupee's worth (six pounds) every day, or that turnips are one anna a seer and not eight annas, etc. So, in the name of Allah, another of long suffering Brown Sahib's hard earned rupees finds its way from Mahomat Ali's hand to Abdul Kareem's begging bowl regularly every Friday. He also knows that poor Kaijan Hisha has no children and is daily living in terror that her husband may either bring home a new *bibi,* upon whom she will have to wait or, worse still, he may even turn her out of the house and as her mother and father are dead, whatever would she do? So another rupee finds its way into the ever ready, out-stretched hand.

The Benares lepers are the worst beggars to be met with. They sit in the sun, rows and rows of them, minus fingers, toes, hands, feet, lips, eyes, ears, etc. A terrible sight! Passers-by throw a pie (one-twelfth of an anna) or a pice (a quarter of an anna), or about six or ten grains of rice to each one. There are leper asylums, but these are insufficient and many more are needed. Also, it is difficult to get the people segregated. However, all will come in time. It just needs trained, willing workers, effort and the wherewith.

NUNS OPEN LEPROSARIUM

Tatsienlu, China, August 17. (N. C. W. C.-Fides).—Word comes from the Tibetan marches that the group of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary have reached Otanze near Mosimien and have opened the leper asylum long planned at this point for the afflicted of this region. The institution will be one of the chain of establishments which Catholic missionaries have long been patiently erecting on both the Chinese and the Indian borders for an eventual advance on Tibet, now closed to evangelization.

THE SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC MEDICAL MISSIONARIES

The Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries is a religious community which was founded in September, 1925, with the approval of His Grace, Most Rev. Michael J. Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore.

The purpose of the Society is to work for the spread of our Holy Faith and to help the sick in foreign mission countries through the establishment of hospitals and dispensaries, medical schools, training schools for native nurses, infant welfare centers, plague camps, leper asylums and traveling dispensaries, and visiting the sick in their homes. Those who are desirous of devoting their lives to God in the service of the sick in the missions find ample scope for their generosity.

Three kinds of candidates are admitted: Those who are already professionally equipped as doctors, pharmacists, nurses, etc.

Young women who desire to take up medicine, pharmacy or nursing with the intention of devoting their professions to the care of the sick in the missions.

Those who have no medical training or do not wish to take it up, but who are desirous of helping with the non-medical activities necessarily associated with the work, such as secretarial work, housekeeping, etc. There is scope for every talent.

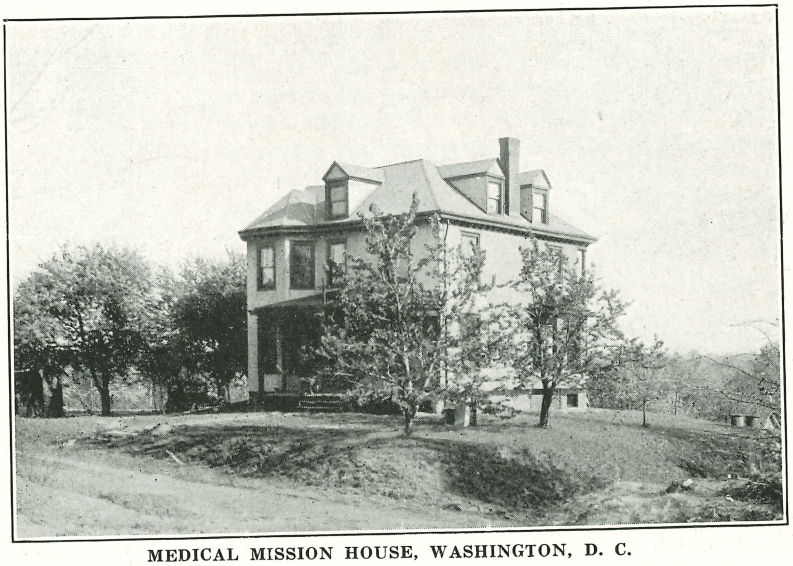
Address all enquiries to Dr. Anna Dengel, Catholic Medical Mission House, Brookland, Washington, D. C.

Addresses of Our Missionaries:

In the Punjab: The Holy Family Hospital, Murree Road, Rawalpindi, Punjab, India.

In Bengal: St. Michael's House, Segoon Baghan, Ramna Station, Dacca, Bengal, India.

Promote Medical Missions by subscribing to the MEDICAL MISSIONARY. Subscription $1 a year. Address: The Medical Missionary, Brookland, Washington, D. C.

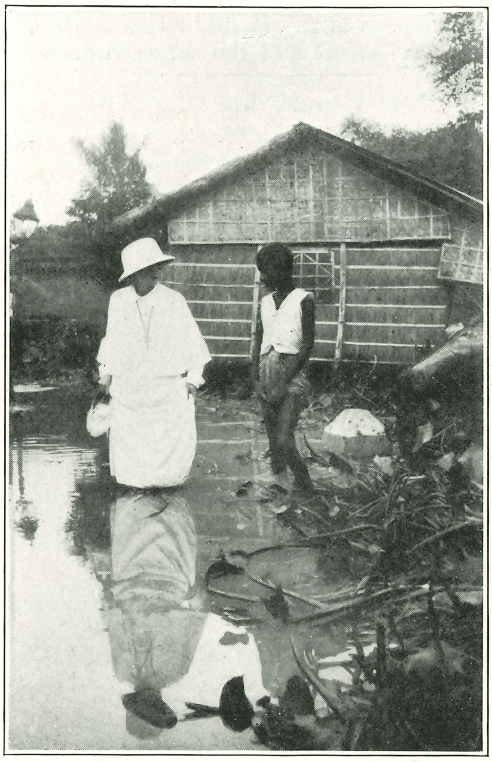


MEDICAL MISSION HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

DACCA

AN INTERESTING account of the recent floods in Bengal has reached us from Sister M. Helen: "Returning from Darjeeling we passed through areas that looked like vast lakes. Dead cattle floated on the surface everywhere. Houses were washed away and whole



ENCOURAGING SR. HELEN TO GO ON

families were living in boats. Crowds were gathered together on every bit of high land.

"The water is higher than it has been for 50 years. Two hundred and ninety villages are submerged and thousands are homeless and dying of hunger. Large sections of Dacca are under water and hundreds of mud houses have collapsed. In many districts we have not been able to visit our patients as the water is waist deep. We manage to wade when it is only knee deep and unless you have lived in India you can not realize what it means to wade in this water. I wish we could do something more for these poor people. The government is debating giving relief but the machinery of the law works slowly and as they are short of funds I doubt whether they will accomplish very much.

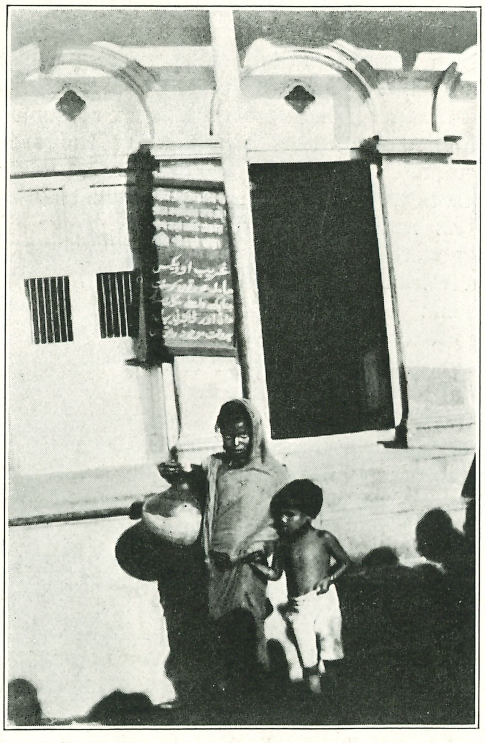
"The wife of the Governor of Bengal, the Honorable Lady Jackson, visited one of our centres last week. We painted and scrubbed for a week beforehand in anticipation of her visit. We succeeded in collecting a hundred and twenty mothers and their babies at the centre for the occasion. We had to give them candy, and take them to and from the centre. The Doctor's idea is to get the mothers and babies to come to the clinics regularly but as the mothers are not interested in hygiene, so far, the only way we have been able to get them to attend is to promise them candy and furnish them with the means of transportation. Lady Jackson was enthusiastic about the Health Centre and its results and donated 500 rupees towards its upkeep."

RAWALPINDI

Dr. B. K. writes her impressions of India—*as she isn't!*

"Just a note to tell you not to believe all of India is as parts of it are. It was rumored that the country is alive with mad dogs in the summer; it is alive with dogs, but none that I have so far seen are mad. There are many parrots (wild) but neither are they red and green nor do they screech much; they are all green and cannot talk at all. Scorpions do live here; they get larger than the palm of a hand; they cannot kill a man but might finish a child. I have seen no bad spiders but believe they do exist. Malaria is common, but I happen to have seen none of the malarial mosquitoes; I have examined malarial blood.

"There are no monkeys this far north, save for one I saw which was a child's pet. Bedbugs are supposed to be plentiful; I have collected none so far. I did have a patient with lice. Centipedes are common and are capable of giving a good bite with each leg. Cats can go mad and cause damage. We have large locusts, I am told, and sand fleas! But nothing has bitten me yet."



CHILD WELFARE CENTRE AT DACCA, UNDER THE CARE OF OUR SISTERS

MEDICAL MISSION NEWS

HUMANITARIAN WORK OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

THREE months ago the Catholic University of Peking was requested by the Fathers of Scheut Mission in Mongolia to set aside a part of its microbiological and pathological laboratory for the manufacture of a curative serum against typhus fever. Realizing the scientific and humanitarian value of such a serum, if easily and cheaply manufactured, the university did not hesitate to accede to the wishes of the missionaries. A special laboratory was equipped, and the medical experts in charge were given every convenience in the carrying out of their experiments.

The director of the new laboratory is Dr. Stephen Gadjos, a very competent Hungarian bacteriologist. His colleague in the work is Dr. Joseph Chang, a Chinese graduate physician of the Louvain University Medical School. These two experts in their field were secured by the Very Rev. Joseph Rutten, recently Superior-General of the Scheut Missionaries in Mongolia.

Two antidotes have been discovered by scientists to check the ravages of typhus fever (typhus exanthematicus). The one, called the Weigl vaccine, involves an expensive and tedious process in its manufacture. Five hundred lice must be used for the inoculation needed to immunize one human being. The other, called the Nicolle serum, gives promise of being more easily and less expensively prepared. Doctors Gadjos and Chang have accordingly set as their task the discovery of a new and improved method of manufacturing the Nicolle serum.

If the experiments now being carried on at the university are successful, it is intended to prepare and supply fresh serum on a large scale. This, of course, will call for heavy expenditures. The Holy Father has given a special subsidy for the work, and the Belgian Government has given it some financial assistance. The Catholic University is doing all it can to aid Doctor Gadjos in his experiments, but of its own resources it can not hope to make the serum sought of wide-spread benefit.

Typhus Takes Toll of Missionaries

The exanthematicus typhus is a dread disease that from time immemorial has held sway nearly everywhere, and has at times decimated whole districts. It flourishes in impoverished lands, and has made its ravages felt specially in places like Mongolia and the northern provinces of China. No respecter of persons, it has taken a heavy toll of missionaries who have come to labor in typhus-infested districts. In Mongolia, for instance, the Scheut Fathers have lost over 150 of their personnel; this means an annual loss of five to six missionaries. The Scheut Fathers, men of the breed Caesar immortalized (in his famous lines "horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae"), are staking much on the success of the experiments now being made at the Catholic University. Bravely have they faced a dread enemy in their work of spreading the Gospel. It has been a battle to the death. With new and more effective weapons with which to fight they may look forward to a new era in their mission work.

DR. MARGARET LAMONT, R.I.P.

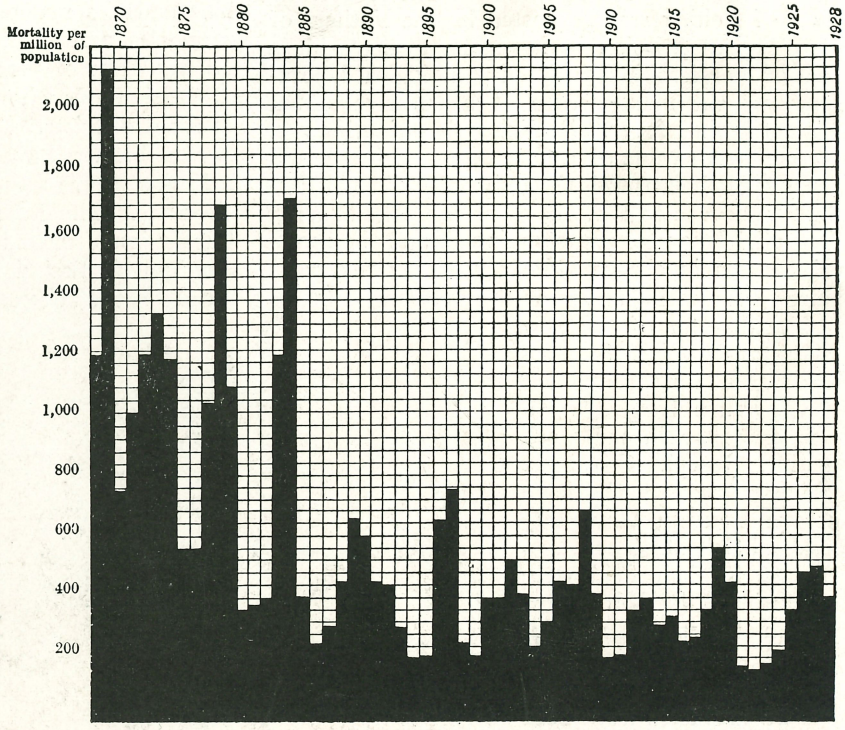
DR. MARGARET LAMONT, M.D., B.SC., D.P.H.

With Dr. Margaret Lamont, whose death occurred in August in Port Said, passed away a well known advocate of the Medical Mission Cause. According to her own account, she was dedicated to the Medical Mission Service as a small child by her Protestant Mother. Twenty-four years ago Dr. Lamont became a Catholic and since then worked and wrote indefatigably about the need of doctors and nurses in the missions. She sought the approval of Benedict XV for an association, to provide doctors for the mission field. In her capacity of Medical Officer in India, Mesopotamia, China, British East Africa, Natal and Egypt, she saw medical needs in many lands, in season and out of season. At the cost of much personal fatigue and labour she tried to arouse interest in the sufferings of the people in the Orient and Africa. Dr. Lamont has a large share in the present progress of Medical Missions. She was acquainted with Dr. McLaren, also a distinguished convert and foundress of the first Catholic Hospital in the missions, in our time. This is another example of the great zeal of converts for the works of Mother Church.

DEVASTATING DISEASES OF INDIA

IN addition to cholera and plague, smallpox and kala-azar may be reckoned among the worst of the various epidemic diseases of India.

The incidence of smallpox throughout India in 1927 was moderate, and an improvement occurred in 1928; in 1929, as a whole, the improvement was marked, and the mortality from the disease was half that of the previous year. In January, 1929, the incidence generally was low, though the ports of Bombay, Karachi and Madras were infected with smallpox of a very severe type. In February and March there were numerous cases in the Bombay, Madras and Bengal Presidencies, but throughout the country as a whole the prevalence of the disease was not above the normal; and by August smallpox was everywhere decreasing. In November a few outbreaks occurred but these abated before the end of the year. In the first quarter of 1930 unusually severe epidemics visited several districts. Smallpox was also prevalent in an epidemic form in the Central Provinces, and nearly all the maritime towns of India were affected. Cases consequently broke out in ships which had touched India, and severe restrictions were accordingly imposed on Indian shipping by many foreign countries, under the International Sanitary Convention. These restrictions, however, besides disorganizing Indian commerce considerably, have in many cases proved difficult to work, and it is being considered whether representations for their relaxation may not be made.



SMALLPOX IN BRITISH INDIA (1868-1928)

Kala-azar is a disease which although not peculiar to India has severely affected some parts of the country, especially Assam, which is at present the chief seat of the disease. Probably it has been endemic in Bengal and Assam for centuries, but about 1882 it entered Assam in epidemic form through the Garo Hills and thence spread up the valley of the Brahmaputra. Its advance though slow was deadly, whole villages being devastated and reverting to jungle; the mortality rate of those affected was over 90 per cent, and the very name kala-azar was mentioned with terror by the inhabitants. The nature of the disease was investigated by Indian research workers and the success of the new method of treating it is one of the greatest therapeutic triumphs of recent times, since an infection with a case mortality of 90 per cent, has been converted into one with a recovery rate of 90 per cent. The treatment is by the injection of antimony or organic compounds thereof. Hundreds of men have been carefully trained in the technique of inoculating this potent drug wholesale into the affected population of the villages, and its inhabitants, realizing its miraculous effects, have flocked for treatment in thousands, so that by the year 1929-1930 the disease could fairly be regarded as being under control. The Kala-azar Commission is still at work in Assam, although the nature and the treatment of the disease are now thoroughly understood, there yet remains to be discovered the means by which it is transmitted. A sand fly, Phlebtomus Argentipes, which was originally suspected by the workers at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, is probably the carrier, but experimental proof of this is still lacking.—*India*, 1929-1930.

"The saints had ever a childlike confidence and trust in God. Upon Him they cast all their anxieties and cares, under His powerful protection they sheltered themselves, and with His Almighty help they were ever strong. They lived in the present day alone, striving to bear with cheerful hearts the burden of the moment; the morrow's work would bring its stream of graces to help them on their journey."—*Father William Doyle, S.J.*